

## INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

DATE DISTR. 21 MAR 50

SUBJECT General Difficulties at the  
Skoda Works, Pilsen**CONFIDENTIAL**

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1. Great difficulties continue to exist at the Skoda Works at Pilsen in Czechoslovakia. Not only has it not been possible to eliminate the old troubles, but new bottle-necks are constantly occurring, as may be seen from the following examples:

- a. Sheet brass is required for bearings in the manufacture of express locomotives for the USSR. As the sheet brass is unobtainable, the management of the works offered the Russians cast bearings as a substitute, but these were refused. Thereupon the works manager, Brabec [redacted] went to Prague in May 1949 and obtained a permit for 250 kg of sheet brass for this special case. 50X1-HUM
- b. In the bearings of large rolling mills, bushings of cuaiac wood (a tropical hardwood of the highest quality) were used. Since 1945 vain attempts have been made to obtain this wood. Various substitutes are now used (metal alloys, artificial materials, etc.) but have not proved satisfactory.
- c. The large frame (for large pieces) was to have been rebuilt by 1943, but it was not carried through. The same was planned for 1946, but was not carried through. The project was also turned down in the Five-Year Plan. Reconstruction cost was estimated at 200,000,000 Kcs. 50X1-HUM
- d. In 1945 the Skoda Works were to receive a new steam-hydraulic press (10,000 or 15,000 tons). The largest existing press weighs 5,000 tons. The new press was delivered [redacted] but was never mounted in the old locomotive works (mechanical workshops). The work was delayed until 1947/1948, and the parts were taken away again, presumably to Vitkovice near Ostrava. 50X1-HUM
- e. There are only two works in Czechoslovakia producing railway wheel sets, namely the Skoda Works and the Vitkovice Iron Works near Ostrava. This department of the Skoda Works was to have been expanded, but in the autumn of 1948 the project was turned down. At the same time the relatively unimportant department at the Vitkovice Ironworks was transferred to a new factory southwest of Ostrava adjoining the station area of Kuncice and was considerably enlarged.

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- f. Since January 1949, the capacity of the Vitkovice Iron Works has been about 1,000 railway wheel sets per month; that of Skoda is about 250 sets per month. Formerly (in 1939) the capacity was up to 600 wheel sets. There is a shortage of wheel tire lathes.
  - g. Production suffers severely from the bad quality of the scrap. There are still old locomotives available for scrap but they must be cut up, and this again is unprofitable.
  - h. The high class pig iron [redacted] is now completely exhausted. The pig iron received as a substitute from Krivoi Rog is of far poorer quality. It is even said that it consists of rejected material.
  - i. Nickel, chrome, and molybdenum are very scarce. Manganese is received from the USSR.
  - j. The arms department is working to a very limited extent and with a reduced number of workmen. It is intended to transfer a part of it to Dubnica. Work on the development of the latter factory is proceeding at present. Large machines for making arms, such as grooving machines for gun barrels up to 25 m., large presses, etc. are available and in good order but are not being used.
2. Soviet commissions frequently come to Pilsen. This fact and their work in the design office of the arms department are kept secret.

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